



h i l i g h t s

A MAGAZINE FOR HISTON & IMPINGTON



Village Society

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Art and friendship

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Photo: Crocus display at Saint Andrew's Church, Histon. © Geoff Grayton



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A MAGAZINE FOR HISTON & IMPINGTON

HI HUB



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Latest news

Village Society chosen to host local history conference

The History and Heritage of Histon and Impington will be the focal theme of the annual Cambridge Association of Local History (CALH) conference in 2024. So impressed are CALH with Histon & Impington Village Society's achievements in recent years and during the lockdown that they have asked them to host the conference.



Barry Stirling

Their request acknowledges the Village Society's impressive upward trajectory. It has become the most active local history society in Cambridgeshire, and one of the largest, boasting a membership of over 260. Their celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Chivers in the village was a high point of last year, with more than 1,700 visitors attending the exhibition and sales of over 500 books by local author Eleanor Whitehead.

The 2024 conference is set to take place at Histon Baptist Church on Saturday 6 April from 10am to 4pm. Tickets will be available via Eventbrite or the Society's website, with a priority booking process for members to buy their discounted tickets at £10, including refreshments.

Tickets for non-members are £15, but for just an extra £7, conference attendees can become members of the Village Society and enjoy a whole year of monthly talks, termly newsletters, regular local history bulletins, free coffee and cake events, and society trips. Find out more at histonandimpingtonvillagesociety.com

Is Wally hiding in the village?

Where's Wally? Is he a stowaway in your home? If so, don't worry, there will be no questions asked if you hand him in at Histon library. Across Cambridgeshire Libraries, 150 copies of the 'Where's Wally' series of children's books have gone missing – the highest number of missing titles – and they'd like them back. Horrid Henry has done a bunk as well, with nearly 60 copies missing. Terri Lewis, the Area Library Manager for Histon has put out a plea for their safe return home. "Don't worry if your books are late. We don't charge on overdue children's titles, so please bring them back so others can share."



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Parking penalties pending

Parking offences in the village are set to be penalised after new Civil Parking Enforcement powers were approved by Parliament in November 2023 and came into effect on 19 December. A 'grace period' will apply throughout January, when people who ignore parking restrictions will be issued with a Warning Notice but with no fine attached. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued from 1 February which will mean a fine of between £50 and £70, depending on the severity of the offence.

Work begins to replace A14 trees

The replanting of new trees to replace those that died during the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme has now begun and will continue until March 2024. National Highways have identified 165,000 trees that need replacing – a better survival rate than previously predicted.

Due to road safety concerns there are some areas where it isn't possible to replace dead trees or maintain the existing ones, so around 1,200 in these areas will be re-distributed to other places.

To improve the success rate this time round, the planting will include a higher proportion of cell grown plants with a full fibrous root system, with bare root plants only for species that are suitably resilient. Also, to help the trees establish themselves during the vital first 12 months, tree-specific fertilisers are being used to improve water retention.

A National Highways spokesperson said: "We will continue to work collaboratively with county, district and parish councils, together with councillors and their communities, and the HI Trees group in Histon & Impington."



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News review

Been away? Too busy to keep up with the local news? Having some digital downtime? Here's a snapshot of some stories you may have missed over the past few months.



To read these and other news stories in full, go to www.hihub.info/news or scan the QR code

New busway to pass through Impington

The new busway between Waterbeach and Cambridge will include a short stretch through Impington, as well as passing through Milton and Landbeach to the east of Mere Way, the boundary between the two villages.

Record-breaking Beer Festival raises over £15k for charity

Records tumbled at the 23rd Histon Beer Festival, with the volunteer-run event making a profit of £15,500 – nearly 25% up on last year's total.



Residents win battle with Council over "devastating" flood problems

Garden Walk residents whose homes have become barely habitable due to flooding have finally won their long-running battle for redress with Cambridgeshire County Council.

Consultation to assess proposals for a pump track site

The team behind efforts to create a pump track in the village are asking residents for their feedback on 22 possible locations for it.

Flooding closes roads and overwhelms drains

Road closures and foul water backing up were among the serious disruptions caused by the most widespread flooding experienced in the village in recent years.

Residents ramp up protests amid increased Luton aircraft activity

Parish Councillors have submitted a noise complaint to London Luton Airport (LLA) on behalf of the community after a group of concerned residents attended a Council meeting and urged them to do more to address noise disruption from aircraft in the skies above Histon & Impington.

Entrance artwork to welcome Croft Close Set-aside visitors

A striking new archway will be installed at the entrance to Croft Close Set-aside land to mark the transition from the urban edge of the village into the wilder space for nature beyond.



CGI by Annabel McCourt

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Chair's Report

Dear Residents of Histon & Impington,

As we begin a brand-new year at Histon & Impington Parish Council, it is time, as it is every year, to submit our request for funding (our precept request) to South Cambridgeshire District Council.

It never ceases to amaze me how much people can get done and how robust solutions can be found when people are working in a team where they feel ownership about the work they do, a passion for their work mates, and the ability to communicate that passion to other people. This takes consideration, openness and honesty, and care and consideration about how your work impacts other people.

3-year planning

I raise the above for consideration as I see our Council working differently, with both Staff and Councillors quickly adapting to that new way of working. This year for the first time in many years, HIPC has information in front of us to consider estimates for items that will feed into our 3-year plans. Council is considering items that we are aiming to implement and support in the future, including working with the new HI Pump Track Charity and development of our Recreation Ground to meet the need for increasing capacity.

The responses we receive from our precept survey, asking how residents would like to see the money the Parish Council receives from Council Tax spent, will also be fed into our budget considerations. I thank all our Sports Clubs for distributing this survey to their members to make sure their voices

can be heard. Also, thank you to Impington Village College for the invitation to speak to their Youth Council and to Histon & Impington Tennis Club for the discussion around all-weather courts.

Adapting to change

As we strive to further increase HIPC's relevance to our villages, all our Councillors attended a Full Council workshop on 27th November 2023, to consider how we adapt to the significant changes and demands we have seen put on Local Councils. Our agenda had considerable input from many of our Councillors and we asked ourselves some tough questions around how we could improve what we do for our villages.

The agenda included consideration of the below:

- How our increasing workload can be consistently monitored;
- Improved speed and transparency of communications internally and to our residents;
- Finance processes to give greater oversight of immediate and future spend;
- Employment & Staffing – how do we ensure our staff team are complete and well-supported?

All of these are early ideas to aid the proactivity of this Council and the increasing interest from residents in how they can collaborate with HIPC. The workshop started to identify tangible improvements, and we will bring you some of the results of this workshop in some Full Council Agenda decisions in January and February.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of our Parish Council Staff to the provision of great facilities in our villages and

the urgent and challenging task to ensure we have support in place for the gap left by the departure of our Head Groundsman, Steve Campin. As HI Hub noted, the 'End of an Era' for our Council.

Staff team

As we look to take steps to increase support for our villages by our staff team, we are pleased to highlight some initial changes below to our staff team titles reflecting the changing requirements of their roles.

- Chelsea O'Brien's job title changes from Clerk to Clerk & Executive Officer
- Amelia Luck's job title changes from Administration Assistant to Assistant Clerk
- Theresa King's title remains as Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

We would especially like to thank Theresa for her focus on increasing governance of our finance processes, and Chelsea and Amelia for enabling all roles to have the required focus as each role becomes more demanding. All of these highlight the importance of the staff roles in consistently maintaining the operations of our Parish Council and enabling the team to have time and space to increase advice to the Council on strategy whilst navigating the many Parish Council guidelines.

As we address a time of change in 2024, we look forward to keeping you all updated on the solutions we put in place. Please let us know when we fall short.



Wishing you all a very Happy New Year.
Yvonne Murray, Histon & Impington Parish Chair

Planning for floods

John Gooch



We should treat the road flooding events during the weekend 20/21 October 2023 as an early warning or a near miss. Either way, it should give us a greater sense of urgency about the need to prepare for more serious flooding events and to put in place a plan to mitigate the effects of a future flood.

This will mean adopting a Community Flood Plan. Whilst a Flood Plan has already been drafted, the vital final step in order that it can be adopted and implemented is the formation of a Local Community Flood Action Group to cover both Histon and Impington, and the recruitment of a Volunteer Flood Coordinator. Once these are in place the Environment Agency will be able to provide a basic Flood Emergency Kit which can be enhanced by additional funding from the Parish Council.

The flood risks

There are two sources of flood risk that would affect Histon and Impington. The first area is the main drainage channels, officially referred to as the Public Award Drains. These are known as:

- **Award Drain 164:** This runs from south to north. It starts south of the A14, crosses NIAB land and enters the settlements at Villa Road. It goes past the old Infants School, under Station Road, past the north side of the war memorial and then goes in a culvert under the B1049 to The Brook.
- **Award Drain 165:** This runs east to west and comes into the settlements between St Georges Way and Woodcock Close, then passes Merrington Place and Ambrose Way. It is then culverted under the B1049 south to The Brook. It exits between the old

Institute/Korten building and Pages Close, runs behind the School Hill / Tesco site, under the St Andrews Centre and out along the north side of Park Lane.

The Parish Council has negotiated the installation of water level monitoring equipment by the County Council at the culverts under Station Road facing the War Memorial and at Park Lane, facing east towards St Andrews Centre.

The second area of risk are road gullies that have become blocked and unable to cope with large volumes of rainfall. This is what we saw happen in October. While it is a less serious risk, it does cause significant disruption through closing flooded roads. Also, those properties that might be at the same level or even lower than the adjacent road could suffer a risk of flooding.

Mitigation

The recent events in October, while principally affecting highways, also gave a hint of how rising water levels can affect properties even when floodwaters are some distance from the building. Some households experienced slow draining or even blocked toilets, especially downstairs. These, along with garages, are the key vulnerable entry points for flood water. The recent Floodmobile exhibition displayed some effective and low cost means of sealing downstairs toilets in the event of these dangers.

The principal areas at risk of water flooding out of the award drains were mapped in a report published by the County Council in 2014 – Histon and Impington Surface Water Management plan. These areas were leafletted in March 2023 prior to the visit of the County Council's Floodmobile, which exhibited various pieces of equipment that householders could deploy to mitigate flood risks. This exercise increased awareness and attendance, and will be repeated shortly in order to canvas interest in joining a Local Community Flood Action Group.



John Gooch

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Groundsman Steve Campin
groundsman@hisimp-pc.gov.uk

Ranger Trevor Smith
asst.groundsman@hisimp-pc.gov.uk

Council & Committee Meetings

All meetings held in the Recreation Ground Community Room.

Dates

Finance, Governance and Legal

7.30pm Monday 8 January, 15 April

Planning and Development Consultation

7.30pm Tuesday 30 January, 20 February

Full Council

7.30pm Monday 15 January, 19 February, 18 March. Refreshments are served from 7pm

Highways, Drainage and Formal Spaces

7.30pm Tuesday 23 January, 5 March

Nature and Biodiversity

7.30pm Tuesday 06 February, 30 April

Wellbeing, Recreation and Leisure

7.30pm Monday 22 January 2024, 4 March

See website for details

www.hisimp-pc.gov.uk

Please note: Committee meeting dates are subject to change. Notice of changes are posted on the website and events page.

Nature and Biodiversity: tree works

Brian Whitehead



The Parish Council has tree surveys undertaken on its parish-owned sites every three years, and the latest one was undertaken in February 2023. The reports were received, and some further testing done on some highlighted trees.

The surveys noted 71 trees requiring work or monitoring. The Parish Council Tree Officer then reviewed the surveys and suggested a plan of works across all the sites which has then been presented to the Nature and Biodiversity Committee.

The Tree Officer's review of the suggested works took into consideration the safety aspect of the work to be undertaken (e.g. where trees were over footpaths, or where they pose a risk to the public, or those where there are infectious tree diseases such as sooty bark disease) as well as considering mitigation for nature and biodiversity. Where felling has been recommended, this might include looking at pollarding as an alternative or leaving habitat monoliths in place. Wherever possible, the Parish Council will leave trees recommended for felling as habitat monoliths, as they provide valuable habitats for biodiversity, but leaving diseased trees could lead to further trees being infected.

The Tree Officer undertook their review in September/October 2023. They found that

some trees had declined over the summer, whilst some trees previously thought dead had revealed more in the late summer, with leaves still being on the tree and therefore showing signs of growth. Their recommendations were then reviewed by the Nature and Biodiversity Committee.

Having reviewed the recommendation of the Tree Officer, further advice is being sought on some trees (including a tree that could potentially be denoted as an Ancient tree in the Coppice) and quotes are being sought from contractors before the works are planned and scheduled. Most of the areas in question are covered by Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), so there will be a delay before the work can start, but we aim to get as much done as possible by the start of the 2024 bird nesting season. Where a tree is dead, diseased or dying, the work can be prioritised.

Once we have firm plans for the work we will publicise them on our website, with separate lists for each site, and invite comments from the community. Where health and safety does not require us to take one firm course of action and there is a genuine choice in management – for example, whether to leave a habitat monolith for biodiversity or to fell completely for landscape reasons – we will make this clear and community input will help us take our final decision.

Parish Councillors

Chair:

Yvonne Murray – Narrow Lane 237173

Vice Chair:

Edd Stonham – Normanton Way
564534

Councillors:

Joseph Adam – Mill Road c/o 235906

Sarah Allen – Cambridge Road c/o
235906

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Steve Carrington – Nuns Orchard c/o
235906

Jennifer Crockford – Park Avenue c/o
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Walter Davey – Park Avenue 234210

Neil Davies – Dwyer Joyce Close
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Community in action

Not so dormant...

Gardens may lie dormant at this time of year, but not so Histon & Impington Garden Club. On 9 January they will hear Geoff Hodge talking about growing your own veg and hosting a gardeners' question time. On 13 February speaker Jim Paine will explain the 'life of plants', how they tell the time and how and why they communicate with each other. Then on 12 March Dr Twigs Way will reveal the origins of traditional wildflower names. *Meetings are at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall. Contact Richard Ackroyd on 01223 236315;*

histimpgardenclub.wordpress.com

Students to perform for the village

This Spring Term the Impington Music Society is offering local music students a performance platform – for some a chance to rehearse their graded exam pieces, and for others a taster of a future life as a professional musician. On Friday 16 February it will be students of the Stephen Perse Foundation schools, then Friday 22 March is the turn of Thanea Hodges' senior piano students. *Concerts start 7.30pm in the Brackenbury Room at Impington Village College. Tickets £10 (£5 18 and under) Email impingtonmusicsoc@gmail.com*

Helping people get around

Do you have your own car and a full driving licence? Or access to a computer? Could you spare an hour or two a week for the Histon, Impington and Girton Car Scheme? They provide door-to-door transport for people who can't use public transport and don't have a car. Since April 2023 they have supported more than 250 trips, for reasons including dental appointments, shopping, making public transport connections and visiting friends.

Drivers get 45p per mile to cover costs and can choose which trips to accept and how much time they want to volunteer. Drivers or non-drivers with access to a computer can volunteer as coordinators who liaise between passengers and drivers to book trip requests – or simply offer a helping hand. *Email hig.car.scheme@gmail.com or 01223 297881.*



Honing the skills of young carers



When young people start babysitting they are often taking responsibility for other people's children for the first time.

To give them the skills and knowledge to do the job safely and confidently, the Connections Bus Project runs regular 10-week babysitting courses in after-school hours at Histon Baptist Church.

As well as getting practical and hands-on experience, course members learn subjects including accident prevention, handling babies and communication skills. They complete a portfolio of work and gain a certificate on successful completion of the course.

There are 14 places available on each course but the January programme is already full. Would-be baby-sitters can sign up on the waiting list for a future course. *See the website at www.connectionsbusproject.org.uk*

A place to call home

The charity HI Friends had a busy autumn, starting by finding a space of its own in the village. Kay Hitch Way Community Centre now serves as the venue for its pre-existing activities and services. The Day Centre, Wellbeing Café, Forget-me-not Support Group and many more now regularly meet in the newly redecorated space, which they refer to as 'HI Friends Hub'. Kay Hitch Way residents continue to use the space and HI Friends celebrated their arrival there with a tea party at the Centre for residents, decorated by planters of blooming flowers outside.

Another HI Friends activity is the Wellbeing Team, who have recently welcomed Dementia Support Co-ordinator Julie Uttridge to succeed Sarah Brown. Julie has already made herself an integral part of the charity and will be supporting and signposting those who live with dementia or memory loss.

Other recent events include the Bonfire Burn 10k running event in November, which had its highest number of runners since Covid-19. They persevered despite strong winds, raising vital funds.

Mothers' Circle, the postnatal group supporting new mothers, provided a welcoming safe space to talk about motherhood; and Holiday at Home hosted several enjoyable outings for over-60s, including a Mamma Mia! movie afternoon, a trip to the Shuttleworth Collection and a Christmas Concert.

HI Friends Flourishing Start Programme began with Year 5 children at Park Primary School, aiming to give them tools and techniques for wellbeing. Impington Village College's Mental Wellbeing Champions project also gained momentum, with around 35 young people being trained to support their own and their peers' wellbeing.

With new work in schools, new activities and services in the pipeline in 2024, and the ongoing work of their Wellbeing Team, the good news is HI Friends will be continuing to support local residents during the year ahead.

For more information, visit

www.hifriends.org.uk, or on Facebook at [@FriendsHICommunity](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsHICommunity), or Instagram at [@hi_friends_charity](https://www.instagram.com/hi_friends_charity)



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Loss adjustment

For those who have lost loved ones, an opportunity to share with others who have been bereaved can bring much needed hope for the future. Providing support for this, the Hope Again group-based bereavement support programme will be running again in the spring, coordinated by an



experienced counsellor.

From 8 February to 14 March, six weekly sessions will take place at the Methodist Church Hall on Thursday afternoons, 2pm to 4pm.

To find out more contact the programme coordinator on 07707 263353 or hopeagain@hifriends.org.uk

Filling the gaps

The avenue of 200-year-old mature horse chestnuts along Park Lane is a distinctive sight for anyone entering Histon from the west. In recent years though, gaps in the line have appeared as disease has taken its toll and seven of the original 13 have now been lost. Three more are suffering from the disease bleeding canker, which often affects horse chestnuts and can prove fatal.

Replanting with more horse chestnuts would be risky so, thanks to a grant from the Feast Committee, Histon & Impington Green Spaces (HIGS) will be replanting with several native species. The first two new saplings planted are small-leaved lime and oak, and the specimens are of a size that should establish



Guy Richardson

quickly and in a few years' time will rise above the Park Lane hedge.

HIGS would like to plant at least two more trees next winter so that the avenue can soon be infilled. Any community group or business that would like to sponsor a tree to help restore the line should contact Histon & Impington Green Spaces at hello@higreenspaces.org.

For more information see <https://abbeyfields.online>

Going for goals

David Berry



It's not been an easy season for the men's 1st team at Histon FC, but after a disappointing start, and with a new manager, things are looking up. The team is looking ahead to a successful New Year and support from the local community will put a real

spring in their step – and balls in the back of the net. Home games start at 2pm during the darkest months of the year, with fixtures on 13 and 27 January, and on 17 February. Then on 2 and 23 March, and 23 April, kick-off is at 3pm. So whether football is your thing or not, a home game at the Bridge Road stadium is sure to provide an afternoon of entertainment and thrills (and hopefully the right result!)

Full details online at www.histonfc.co.uk

Wassail to wake the trees

Wassailing is a tradition dating back a thousand years, and it's being kept alive at the Community Orchard. This year the HICOP Wassail will be back on Saturday 20 January at 4pm. So bring lanterns and torches to find your way, and bring pots, pans and spoons to bang and make a hullabaloo to wake the trees. Toast masters will make the traditional toast to the trees, and then there's singing with some traditional Wassail songs around the HICOP flaming beacon. Hot and cold apple juice available too – so bring your own mug!



Penny Reeves

Local singers get acquainted with great English composers

Histon & Impington's Choir2000 will be spending the winter months rehearsing to sing Parry's Songs of Farewell and a concert version of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, ready for performances on Friday and Saturday 22 and 23 March at Histon Baptist Church. With fabulous soloists set to join them, all under the baton of the choir's Musical Director Chloë Allison, this is a rare chance for singers to explore these great English composers through two beautiful and poignant pieces of music. Why not join them?

Contact the choir organisers via www.choir2000.org/contact-us/



Contact Nikki on
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Community in action

Time to get growing

Winter may not be the obvious time to think about gardening, but it is the right time to start preparing for the village's biennial Open Gardens event. The 2024 event will be on Sunday 16 June and aims to equal or better the record-breaking success of the 2022 event, when 2,500 programmes were sold and a whopping £11,000 raised for charities.

Whether or not you're planning to open your garden to the local community, the first few months of the year are all about preparation. If you're planning to grow anything from seed this Spring – flowers or vegetables – could you plant a few extras for the Open Gardens team to sell seedlings that day at their popular plant stall on The Green? Or if you're splitting plants, or have some that have self-seeded a little too generously,

could you pop them into pots and save them for the sale? Someone can even collect them from you in the run-up to the event, or you can simply bring them along to The Green on the day.

Another much-loved feature of Open Gardens is the live music. From community choirs to jazz, folk to brass bands, the music brings a unique atmosphere and magic to the gardens. If you're interested in performing this year, just get in touch with the organisers as soon as possible, so that they can find a suitable space for you.

Contact the Open Gardens team at info@opengardens.org and find out more about the event at www.opengardens.org. Follow them on Facebook or Instagram to stay up to date as they prepare for this year's event.



Brianng

District and County



Learn to reduce, re-use and repair

Workshops for schools, community groups and businesses are part of Cambridgeshire County Council's efforts to get everyone doing more to reduce, re-use and recycle.

For school and youth groups, the Waste Education Service offers hour-long outreach visits delivered by qualified teaching professionals. These include bin-sorting activities for the young people to decide what to put in each bin, as well as short films and presentations about landfill and why we recycle. Adult workshops include guidance on which household waste items you can recycle and advice on what we can do to reduce, re-use and repair what we currently throw out.

Anyone wanting to see the whole recycling process for themselves can book a visit to the Waste Education Centre in Waterbeach. The Centre gives visitors the chance to see for themselves how their 'blue bin' household recycling waste is processed.

For more information see www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/waste-education-service To arrange a workshop contact Jon Crisp Jonathan.Crisp@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or 07887 387977. Or email the Waste Team at wmt@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/waste-education-service>



Histon Library opening hours

Over the Easter period the library will be closed during both staffed and Open+ hours on Friday 29 March, Sunday 31 March and Monday 1 April. It will be open normal hours on Saturday 30 March and after Easter from Tuesday 2 April.

	Staffed	Open+ access
Monday	11am – 7pm	8am – 11am
Tuesday	2pm – 5pm	8am – 2pm
Wednesday	Closed	Closed
Thursday	9am – 5pm	8am – 9am
Friday	9am – 1pm	8am – 9am and 1.15pm – 7pm
Saturday	9am – 1pm	1.15pm – 4pm
Sunday	Closed	10am – 4pm

Bin collection dates

	Black Bin	Blue Bin	Green Bin
Friday 12 January		✓	✓
Friday 19 January	✓		
Friday 26 January		✓	
Friday 2 February	✓		
Friday 9 February		✓	✓
Friday 16 February	✓		
Friday 23 February		✓	
Friday 1 March	✓		
Friday 8 March		✓	✓
Friday 15 March	✓		
Friday 22 March		✓	✓
Monday 25 March	✓		
Friday 5 April		✓	✓
Friday 12 April	✓		

Milton recycling centre opening hours

	Saturday – Sunday	Closed
January	9am – 4pm	1 January
February	9am – 4pm	
March	9am – 4pm	

Entrance gates shut 10 minutes before closing time | Site may close at dusk if earlier than scheduled closing time

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The answer's 'Yes', so what's the question?



© David Berry

If you're looking for somewhere to meet then The Red Lion will pull out all the stops to make sure you get a warm welcome. Liz Hill found out more about what goes on at the community's popular watering hole.

Your starter for ten... what do Histon's scout leaders, Choir 2000, crib players and the Norton Owners Club all have in common? Answer: they all meet at The Red Lion!

Some make it a venue for planning meetings. So, for example, Cambridge Car Club meets most Wednesday evenings in the Lounge bar where – as well as general chat – conversations will revolve around competing or officiating at motorsport events around East Anglia. Let's face it, if you're sitting around a table trying to work out the logistics of an event, or drawing up a programme of future events, much better to sit around that table with a pint in your hand and a bar behind you to refill your glass. And if you need a bit of privacy, you can just talk to the staff and reserve a table or two in the bottle room, where a discrete curtain can be drawn across to give you a quieter space.

Relax and unwind

For others, The Red Lion is simply a place to meet for a chat following an activity where chatting isn't exactly the point – like swimming, for example, or singing, for that matter. Groups of local residents on their way home from village activities – everything from choir practice to a Parish Council meeting – are known to make a beeline for the bar, maybe just to get to know each other better, or to relax after their responsibilities are over. Where better, on a Friday evening, for teachers to unwind after surviving a week in the classroom.

A place to celebrate

If it's a more formal event, like a birthday party or a graduation celebration, then the community is equally welcome. The Red Lion's attitude to these types of gatherings warms the heart. Their support for the annual Beer Festival is just one example of their engagement with the community, another being 'lunch at The Red Lion', which has become a popular venue on the Holiday at Home calendar.

General Manager Andy Pierce told me "We are a community pub and we want the community to think of us as 'their' local, and the first port of call when they have an idea for an event. We always try to make it happen." Indeed, they have been hosts for events from pre-cradle to grave, everything from baby showers to wakes, and – a notable one – even a whole funeral complete with the deceased in a coffin.

In competition

Local people also meet at the pub for some more traditional pub-related activities, like the popular Tuesday quiz night. The Red Lion darts team meets on Mondays and players compete in the Histon & District Darts League, with home matches bringing in visitors from as far away as Bar Hill. If cards are more your thing, there's the equally competitive Crib Club, and summer will see the Pétanque Club out on the terrain in the car park, testing out their skills against clubs from Rampton, Willingham and other local villages.

Clearly, the Red Lion is a pub that says 'Yes'. As for the question, if you need somewhere to meet, why not come up with one yourself and see what they say?

To reserve a table for your group or club to meet at The Red Lion, call 01223 564437;

email info@theredlionhiston.co.uk

See the website at theredlionhiston.co.uk



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Features

In case you missed them, here are just a few of the features on HI HUB that have celebrated community life in Histon & Impington over the past few months.



Read more HI HUB features about life in Histon & Impington at www.hihub.info/features or scan the QR code

Pitch perfect performances in the heart of the village

By Lucy Callington



You don't have to be a musician to appreciate the wide range of musical styles and genres on offer from Impington Music Society (IMS). "Most members are simply music lovers, rather than performers", committee member Pat Labistour tells me. Drawn mainly from the local communities of Histon, Impington, Girton, and Cottenham, visitors come from far and wide to the society's concerts and recitals, usually hosted at Impington Village College.

"Events are much less anonymous there than in than a large concert hall, and there's usually a chance to chat with the performers

during the interval, if you wish", Pat explains. "For me, the main attraction of the IMS is the immersive experience of sharing the pleasure of making and listening to music in a small group, rather than simply 'consuming' the music being performed."

Music for all

You don't even need to be an IMS member to enjoy their concerts. In fact, non-member visitors often outnumber members, with concert-goers often attracted by a particular performer on a particular evening.

This open approach and a sense of inclusivity is very much at the heart of what the society stands for, Pat tells me. "We aim to provide performance opportunities for local students and musicians, in a friendly, relaxed and informal environment, and the chance to perform on a top quality grand piano!

[Full article online](#)

From neglected wreck to forever home

By Val Robson

In late February 2022 Shabana Alexander spotted a house for sale on Rightmove that was within her budget and which she could see had potential to become her forever home. Just one catch – it was up for sale by auction just days later.

After a frantic few days organising a viewing and getting up to speed on the process of purchasing a home via auction, Shabana found herself sitting on the end of a phone placing bids via an agent at the auction house. After a stressful few minutes as the bidding soared above the reserve price, Shabana was the proud owner of a 1960s

bungalow in Manor Park, Histon, 'in need of renovation'.

Days later there was further excitement in the household when BBC1's *Homes Under the Hammer* approached Shabana with a request to feature her home on the programme.



[Full article online](#)

The generation game

Local builder, family man and all-round nice guy Matthew Salmon, and his reluctant dog Fletcher, set out with Sheryl Bailey on the Gatehouse Road-Oakington-Westwick loop walk.



Pond life

An eclectic series of curios found at the bottom of a local pond has been displayed in Histon Library, giving a glimpse into life in the village in bygone times. Arnold Fertig tells the story.



Volunteers have dredged East Pond to retrieve objects from the black slime.

Comfort and care over a cuppa

Kirsty Speed, the Age UK community warden for Histon & Impington, is on a mission to help older people stay healthy at home for longer, and she'd like to reach more clients – and more volunteers, reports Lucy Callington.

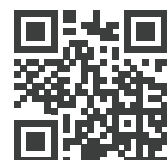
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It is recommended to do so at least once a year, and more frequently if there are

significant changes in your personal or financial life. During difficult times, such as the current socio-economic and geopolitical uncertainty, it is natural to feel anxious and stressed about your finances and investments.

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Spotlight

Abbey Farm

A family affair

The Abbey Farm lands

Nearly three years since their arrival at Abbey Farm, the Watson family talk to Amanda Borrill about how a major renovation project has crossed generations, further strengthening their bond.

Walking into the spacious hallway of the newly renovated barn at Abbey Farm, home to Michael Watson's parents John and Rosemary, the pride the family feels at having reached this milestone is clear. As Rosemary presents us all with tea and home-made cake, I take in the spectacular view across a meadow full of sheep and down towards the glorious avenue of trees that line Park Lane.

The house exhibits a few tell-tale signs of being newly inhabited. Rosemary apologises for the boxes that sit in their kitchen and the lounge window remains undressed because, as she explains, "finding curtains and a rail for such a large window needs quite a lot of thought." But, with a view like that, who needs curtains!

It is hard to believe John and Rosemary both recently celebrated their 80th birthdays. Their retirement has certainly not followed convention. Fully involved in their son's latest project from the start, in January 2023 they left their home in West Road to join him and his family at Abbey Farm. It was the coldest time of year to take up residence in what Michael describes as a "semi-derelict house" and even he seems to struggle to understand why they did it.

But talking to Rosemary and John, the reason is clear. Family is everything. While the thought of living and working alongside our parents might see some of us running into nearby meadows, the Watsons wouldn't have it any other way.

All hands on deck

So, how has life been at Abbey Farm since May 2021? "Busy!" is Michael's instant response. Both he and his wife Sue lament the constant stream of decisions and the shortage of time

for hobbies. There is no switching off and going home to relax.

Preparing to occupy the farmhouse demanded all hands on deck for an extensive clean up. Little work has taken place there yet though, and the many original features include a selection of 'fitted units' in the kitchen dating back to the 1950s. But it is now home to two wood burners giving warmth in at least a couple of rooms – something Sue is particularly relieved about.

There are more barns to convert too. One will house Sue and Michael while the major renovations inside the farmhouse are finished. The remaining barns and stables will form five retreats offering a place of peace and solitude.

Project life is nothing new to the couple though. They have endured several property renovations before, and Sue has been "partner to my crazy schemes now for 29 years", Michael says lovingly. Sons Joe and Charlie make no secret of their frustration that, every time a home reaches the point of being comfortable, they sell up and start again. "Not this time though" Michael assures me.

All consuming

Nothing the family has done previously has been in the same league as what's involved at Abbey Farm but it is clear that Michael's years working in project management equip him well. His high-flying career meant long periods away from home earning him the illustrious title of 'Top Flyer' with Virgin Airlines for three consecutive years but this new grounded life working alongside his family has enhanced their relationship immensely.

The barn at Abbey Farm – before renovation...



... and after.



Rare Goldilocks buttercups in the fields

Programmes like Grand Designs remind us that the course of true renovation rarely runs smoothly, and Abbey Farm is no exception. Mud has been a particular challenge – simply for the amount of it they have encountered since they moved in.

“The first twelve months saw a huge amount of clearance work outside and we were faced with the task of installing sewage, electricity, water and internet. At one point we had trenches in all directions. Thankfully there is no evidence of those now” explained Michael.

Fortunately, with the lows come incredible highs. “Working together as a family, the daffodil walk, finishing my parents’ home...” Michael reels off. “Summer evenings in the meadow with friends, the tranquillity that surrounds us when we stop work and those impromptu visits from the wonderful people who live all around us.”

Michael becomes quite emotional when he talks of the warmth they have been shown

from the village. “Opening the gate at Park Lane regularly sparks conversations with passers-by” he tells me. “These last few years would have been much harder without this wonderful community on our doorstep. Taking lunch together at Saint Andrew’s Centre or a walk to the Red Lion for a pint after a long day feels like such a treat.”

Into the future

The family is dedicated to preserving the glorious unspoilt nature of Abbey Farm and is very aware of that responsibility. Badgers thrive in their woodland and within the ancient meadows grow a variety of plants including a rare Goldilocks buttercup. “‘Don’t mess it up’ is the mantra we live by”, says Michael.

Landscaping works and endless tree maintenance/replanting feature on the to-do list and both Michael and Sue agree that planting trees is something they enjoy immensely. Deciding which trees to plant,

however, isn’t as easy and the family is working with experts to ensure they select trees best suited to this environment.

The Watsons are optimistic that another daffodil walk is on the cards and eagerly anticipate having more time to play host to the community. Autumn 2023 saw their son Charlie set up his Pint Truck in the meadow for a mini beer festival and more are planned.

I couldn’t resist asking them to reveal their dream event and, coming as no surprise to Sue, Michael answered “a huge classic car event of course, with a music festival and really big names – Mumford & Sons or Coldplay. Bands nobody would expect to find playing here in Histon!”

Abbey Farm, it’s clear, could not be in more caring hands. Just don’t mess it up!

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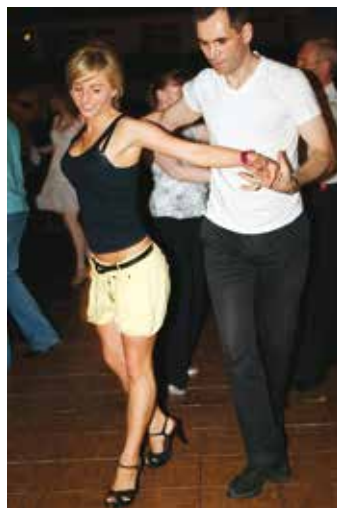
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Weekly Tai Chi

Every Wednesday at 6.30pm

Feel the physiological and psychological benefits of Tai Chi during a weekly class which is suitable for all abilities.

Monthly Pub Quiz

Third Wednesday of every month at 3pm

Put your general knowledge to the test during our monthly pub quiz – form your own team or join in with others.



10 June 2023

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A 2023 visit to the Netherlands included a trip to Delft

Sharing a curiosity for the arts

Be it unravelling threads of the 'spin' behind The Bayeux Tapestry or sharing tales of adventures with yaks, Arts Society meetings and events promise to inspire and enrich your life alongside like-minded friends. Amanda Borrill tells more.

The Arts Society is the UK's leading arts education charity with a network of more than 380 local groups. Its ethos is simple – bringing people together through a shared curiosity for the arts.

Eight years a member, Histon resident Julia Payne is Programme Secretary for one of the local groups, The Arts Society Granta, and a glance through the lecture programme leaves me in no doubt that she knows her subject. "I was inspired to join the Arts Society when I retired from teaching", she smiles. "I wanted to keep my brain active, expand my horizons and meet new people – and indeed, I have."

Working from a directory of over 400 well qualified lecturers, Julia strives to create a varied and lively programme which is entertaining, informative and thought provoking. Each Spring the Arts Society holds a Directory Day where both new and established speakers visit to demonstrate what's on offer – the perfect opportunity for those in roles like Julia's to meet the speakers.

Adapting to challenges

Another highlight of the Arts Society calendar was the popular Sixth Form annual art competition, but this has faced difficulties since being forced online during the pandemic. Before COVID, Arts Societies in Cambridge would invite sixth formers from local schools, including Impington Village College, to submit their work for an exhibition in Cambridge's Michaelhouse Café. "We were always blown

away by the standard of the work produced by our talented young people", Julia reflected. "Sadly the competition had to be suspended because of concerns raised by the Joint Qualifications Board, who said that the exhibiting of work by A-Level students might benefit some candidates over others.

"Schools have interpreted the ruling differently" Julia explained "but several withdrew from the competition in case they were accused of malpractice. We are optimistic that we can bring it back one day but, in the meantime, there are some lovely examples of students' work from past exhibitions on our website."

Trips and visits

Retirement was also the catalyst for Irena Milloy to discover what the Arts Society had to offer. "Five years ago I took up the invitation to experience a morning of delightful company and a stimulating lecture", she recalled. "I was hooked! The diverse subject material in the programme meant that I could expand my own interests and explore new topics which have since become very special to me, especially the lectures on periods of history. The quality of the presenters is always staggeringly professional."

Irena also volunteers for the Society as Visits Co-ordinator, sourcing trips that she hopes will appeal to members from very diverse backgrounds. "Trips and visits give members the chance to explore and experience places and artefacts both near and far" says Irena. Recent trips have included Cambridge Central Mosque, recipient of many international architectural prizes, and Gainsborough's House and Museum in Sudbury. In March 2023, art lovers headed off to The Hague to study the Dutch Masters, taking in the cities of Amsterdam and Haarlem with the added thrill of a visit to the Vermeer Exhibition at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

Unique opportunities

From time to time, members are honoured with a viewing of priceless collections of art and antiques rarely open to the public, such as the diaries of Samuel Pepys at Magdalene College. "We enable groups to see behind the scenes of Cambridge college buildings and gardens, with personal guides to share their in-depth knowledge. We also arrange personally-guided tours from the wealth of museums on our doorstep. For example, in the New Year we will be taking a group to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology."

Other trips to look forward to include the National Horse Racing Stud at Newmarket, behind the scenes at The Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds and, to end the season, The Manor at Hemingford Grey - home and much loved garden of the children's author Lucy Boston.

So if these and the many other activities the Society arranges have captured your curiosity, why not head along to a meeting and find out more.

The Arts Society Granta lectures take place between October and June at Wolfson Hall, Churchill College, Cambridge, starting at 10.45am and with coffee and biscuits from 10am.

Membership is £50 a year and gives access to nine lectures, cultural visits at home and abroad, social events and a monthly magazine on the Arts.

Find out more at
<https://theartsocietysouthcambs.org.uk>



The Milkmaid, Johannes Vermeer, on display at the Rijksmuseum



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Village profile

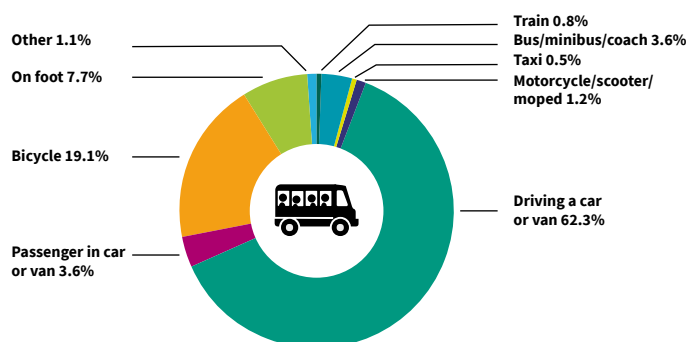
Who are we?

The March 2021 census tells us a lot about the working lives of Histon & Impington residents and there are some interesting comparisons with the 2011 census. But it's worth noting that the data were collected when the third national Covid lockdown was gradually being lifted and the impact of that is reflected in many of the figures.

1

Travel to workplace

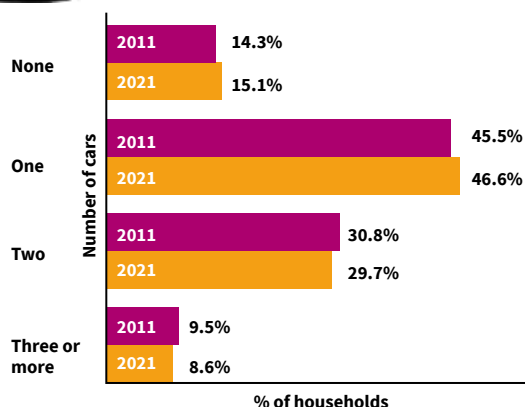
(excluding those working from home or furloughed)



Most working people drove to work during the week of the census, but that will reflect the Covid lockdown instruction to meet other people only in open spaces. Taking passengers was frowned upon and fears of virus transmission limited people's use of public transport. The proportion of people who cycled to work (almost 1 in 5) was way ahead of the national average (around one in 30).

2a

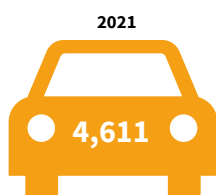
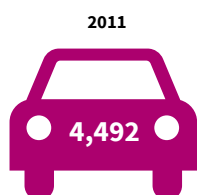
Cars or vans per household



2b

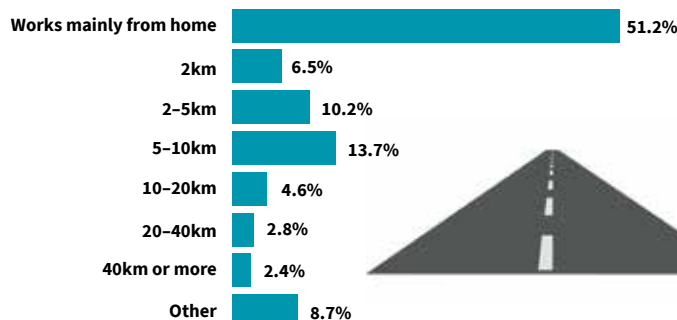
Cars or vans in the village

As the number of households in the village has grown, so too has the number of cars, though the number of cars per household has fallen very slightly from 1.38 to 1.34.



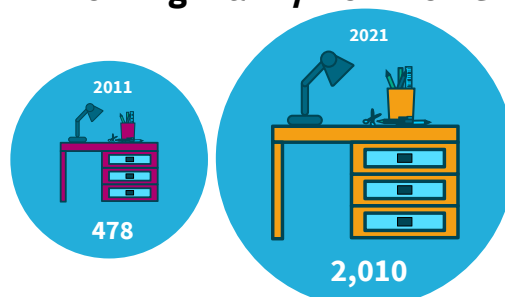
3a

Travel-to-work distance



3b

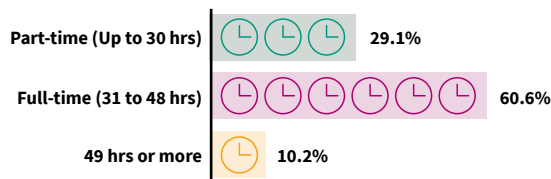
Working mainly from home



The high proportion of 'working from home' responses was no doubt exaggerated by Covid, but nonetheless Histon & Impington residents were much more likely to be working from home than the national average, which was 31% in 2021 and just 5% in 2011. Whether this is a long-term shift we will know in 2031!

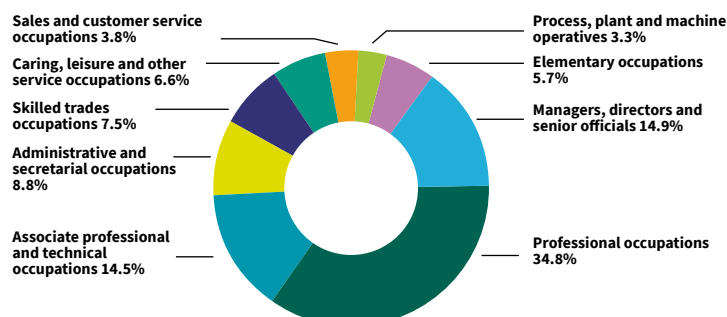
4

Weekly hours of work



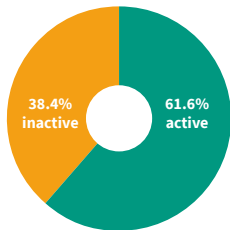
5

Current occupation



6a

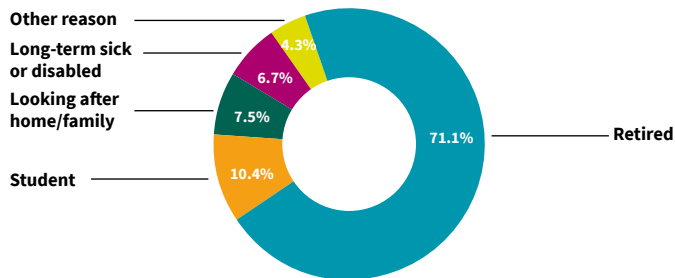
Economic activity



- The majority of working people in Histon & Impington are employees, though around 1 in 6 are self-employed.
- A quarter of those who were employed were working part-time, but among the self-employed, nearly half were working part-time.
- There were 357 full-time students living in the village on the day of the census, of whom more than a quarter were either in paid work, looking for paid work or self-employed.
- More than a third of residents were economically inactive.

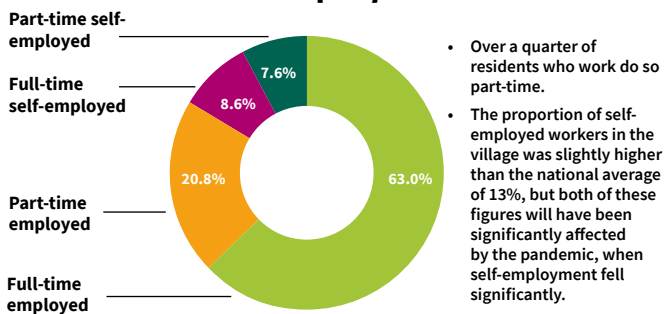
6b

Reasons for economic inactivity



7

Employed



- Over a quarter of residents who work do so part-time.
- The proportion of self-employed workers in the village was slightly higher than the national average of 13%, but both of these figures will have been significantly affected by the pandemic, when self-employment fell significantly.



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How to...

Solve a cryptic crossword



The clue's in the crossword

You might enjoy crosswords, but how do you get on with the cryptic clues? Histon & Impington's very own crossword compiler, Octothorpe, demystifies the art of solving them – and has compiled one (p29) with a distinctively local twist for us all to try.

If you're the sort of person who enjoys a crossword but have given up on the cryptic ones, then don't despair. It could be because no one has ever explained the underpinning principles.

The definition

It's important to think of a clue as a collection of words, rather than a coherent sentence, because a cryptic crossword clue contains two parts which rarely overlap – the definition and the wordplay.

The definition is simply a different word meaning the same thing as the answer, so the first thing to do is try to establish which part of the clue is the definition. To help Histon & Impington beginners get started, the definition in the clues on p29 are underlined.

Like a standard crossword, you can come up with some possible answers that align with the definition. Watch out for the occasional use of slang or colloquialism though, and ignore punctuation, capitalisation and syntax. It's important to consider ALL the possibilities as the setter will attempt to mislead you.

Cryptic composition

It's the cryptic bit that will lead you to one of these options, or even an answer you hadn't thought of.

Perhaps the easiest cryptic solution to find is when the clue simply comprises a double-meaning. For example, 26 across: 'Oddballs thrown in this public school' refers both to the ball game and the school... go figure!

Otherwise, the wordplay comprises indicators (see panel) which tell you what letters you need and/or what you have to do with them to build your answer (the definition itself does not form part of the wordplay).

Synonyms and other clues will lead you to the letters or words you need. These indicators are always next to what needs manipulating or extracting. They could be single letters, acronyms of two or more letters, partial or complete words or even multiple words or a combination.

And finally...

Completing a crossword. Can take four or five sittings over a few days. Clues that might puzzle you on a Monday have the astonishing capacity to become obvious on Tuesday. When the penny drops, you can enjoy that warm sense of satisfaction that keeps regular cryptic crossword fans going. Once you're hooked, there's no going back!

So whether you are a complete beginner or an experienced amateur, have a go at the crossword on p29 and see how far you can get.

Indicator types

Each Indicator type listed here provides an instruction of what needs to happen to the letters together with examples. Just to confuse, some indicator words could imply different instructions e.g. both *Around* and *About* can indicate either Anagram, Contents, or Reversal

ANAGRAM (rearrange the letters)

eg confused, broadcast; by mistake; riotous, turn, about, around, perhaps, drunk, revolting, odd, unusual, crazy, develop, disorder, funny, designed, composing, complicated, bizarre, made, manoeuvre, out

CONTAINER & CONTENTS (Letters either surrounding, or surrounded by, other letters)

eg in, inside, into, eaten, about, around, envelops, embraced, wrapping, harbour, separating, splitting, dividing

USE A SPECIFIC LETTER

First letter: eg heading, leader, first, first of, initially, endless; **Last letter:** eg end of, finally, back of, backing

SUBTRACTION (Specific letters need discarding)

Any letter or letters: eg forgo, lose, discard, throws away; **First letter:** eg beheading, heading off, start off; **Last letter:** eg almost, detailed, tailless; **Central letters:** eg disheartened, empty, gutted, forgo; **Alternate letters:** alternately, even out, every other, oddly lacking

HOMOPHONE (Sounds like another word when spoken)

eg broadcast, announced, according to hearsay, reported, say, heard, so to speak

REVERSAL (Words or letters need reversing)

eg around, about, back, backward, climbing, northbound, westward, revolutionary, turn, taking up, puts up, retreating



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HILights Prize Cryptic Crossword

Set by Octothorpe

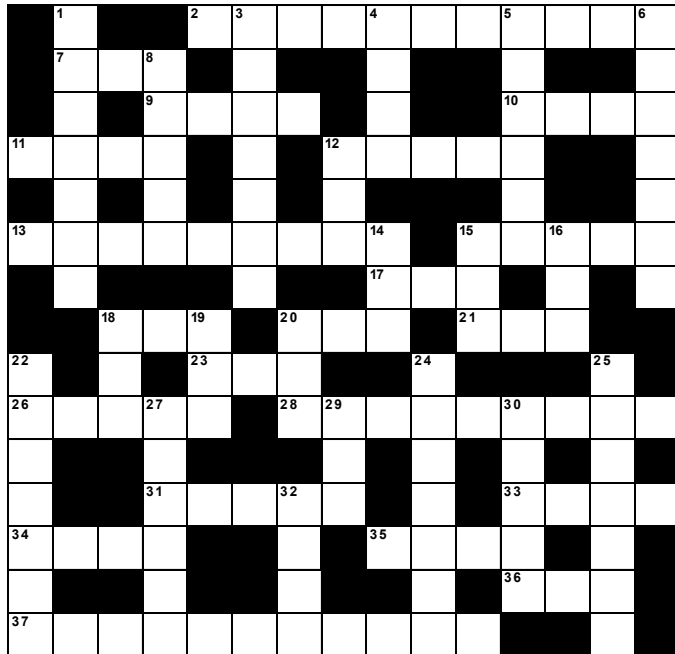


As an incentive for the whole community to have a go at the **HILights Prize Cryptic**

Crossword, Saint Andrew's Café is offering a free cup of coffee/tea and cake to the person with the first complete solution drawn from all the entries submitted, and also to the next entry (complete or not) drawn at random from all who submit a solution, whether the entry is complete or not.

The **closing date for entries is 16 February 2024**. Drop your entry into Print-Out, Histon High Street, in an envelope marked HILights Cryptic Crossword. The solution will be published in the April issue of HILights – and do send us any feedback. Drop us a line to admin@hihub.info and let us know how you got on.

Good luck!



Across

- 2 I, according to NATO, broadcast idea for body of water (6,5)
 7,18A,27 Russian leader surrounds local to inflict act of cruelty (3,3,4,2)
 9 Someone's made a mistake in Coop store (4)
 10 Band of three head down to base and protest seditiously (4)
 11,20A Turn plane and perhaps Pinocchio back tracks (7)
 12 Dear Mr Amin, revolting moron! (5)
 13,28 Drunken Tom dating in posh inn sees local partnership (6,3,9)
 15 Alternatively Mr Kilmer provides type of 35 (5)
 17 Communist Lancastrian rose (3)
 20 See 11
 21 Expecting education in university to be revolutionary (3)
 23 Bellies partial to pork pie (3)
 26 Oddballs thrown in this public school? (5)
 28 See 13
 31 15D & 19 lose energy in an unusual manner (5)
 33 90s band finally release Novocaine... vinyl singles (4)
 34 Indonesian dyeing technique used evenly in silk pants (4)
 35 Wise person's herb (4)
 36 Gran loses right to bring back Harry (3)
 37 Good man celebrated on 30th November and crazily ran in wasted (5,6)

Down

- 1 Eleven people in recovery ate after month developing nervous disorder (7)
 3 Planet's female swans up with song (7)
 4 Help royal in desert-like conditions (4)
 5 Moses was transporter of goods (6)
 6 Put up experimental lab tent which masks sport (7)
 8 For rent: WC I flushed out (2,3)
 12 18A,11,20A,16 or 18A,17,32 perhaps essential to sinning (3)
 14 Abstaining from white wine, maybe? (3)
 15 Funny Ken who made people laugh head off (3)
 16 Five extremely unwatchable films shown here (3)
 18 Got up to get duvet's thermal resistance (3)
 19 Really odd characters out in the Fens (3)
 20 You and I together with endless instalments of Dynasty in China (3)
 22 Endlessly complain about character who designed 28,24,25 (7)
 24,30 What The Kinks' society preserved veering bizarrely around legal complications (7,5)
 25 Cello composition about, for example, Jesus maybe (7)
 27 See 7
 29 Can Prime Minister! (3)
 30 See 24
 32 Fifty-one working for big game (4)

Getting started

If you're new to cryptic crosswords, take a look at p27 for some tips to help you get started. And if you'd like a head start on this one, here are some explanations for a couple of the clues:

36 Across – 'Gran loses right to bring back Harry' (3).

The definition is *harry*. The answer has 3 letters but the clue, Gran, has 4 letters. However, it is next to the word *loses* which indicates getting rid of a letter in the word Gran, but which letter? *Right* = R, so gran becomes GAN; then *bring back* indicates that it needs to be written backwards - so GAN becomes NAG... which means to 'harry'!

1 Down - Eleven people in recovery ate after month developing nervous disorder (7)

This is the hardest clue of all. The definition is *nervous disorder*. Eleven is **xi** in Roman numerals. We can see the word *ate*, which is likely to mean (and does) that some letters are containing other letters. So letters derived from *people in recovery* are doing the eating! What letters might indicate people in recovery? The answer is **AA** (both kinds!). So **aa ate xi** and delivers **axia**. Then we see *after month*. After can mean 'that which has gone previously comes after what is stated next', or sometimes 'that which is stated next comes after'. *Month* is commonly either just 'm' or a short form version of a specific month. As we know the answer has 7 letters and we only have 4 so far (**axia**). Simply putting an 'm' either end would not be enough letters. So it must be an actual month. And in fact it is **Apr**. Axia goes after it to make **Apraxia** which is a nervous disorder.

And one extra clue to help you get started: 18 of the grid entries relate to a distinctly local theme!

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Getting to know... Sue Free



Sue Free at the Orient Express Café on Istanbul Station

If you don't know Sue Free, then you're very likely to bump into her one day.

Having inherited a volunteering streak from her parents, she's been involved in a variety of village clubs on some Committee or other since her children were babies. Over 20 years a Brown Owl with 2nd Histon Brownies and two terms as District Commissioner, "it's a role that opens the doors to so many activities I wouldn't otherwise have got to do", she says. "And it's such a delight to have a part in the girls' lives as they mature from shy 7-year-olds to confident 10-year-olds."

More recently, motivated by a Christian faith that believes we are all stewards of this world – and by 8-year-old Brownies going on School Climate Strike – she has become involved in environmental actions, helping to organise the Eco Fun Fest (2019) and the Eco Fest (2023) and taking a leading role in the St Andrew's Eco Church group. Her latest venture? Launching a new Hedgehog Street Champions initiative.

Sue moved to the village in 1985, drawn by its cycling-friendly distance from her work and rowing club, and the fact that houses north of the city were cheaper than the south. Recently retired, she worked for the previous 22 years as postgraduate student administrator for Fitzwilliam College. She's now on her third house in the village and her grown-up children have moved out, so "it's just my husband, me and the three chickens now" she says.

First ever job/paid work?

Christmas holidays job at Cooks Off-Licence shop in Chelmsford. Alongside the Spirits, the Cinzano and the many different miniatures we sold plenty of Blue Nun and Hirondelle wine. No electronic tills, the bill was added up with pencil and paper and then we just rang up the total.

Artistic talents

I have no talent for painting or drawing, though I often look at a landscape and think 'that would make a good painting'. I'm inspired by colours, textures and shadows in nature – leaves, tree trunks, wild grasses, that sort of thing.

Guilty pleasure?

I can't resist buying a chocolate bar when I fill up with petrol.

Which superpower would you like?

It used to be 'more time' but I retired in summer 2023 and I'm still working on my new superpower wish-list.

Best holiday ever?

So many to choose from. My siblings tell me I hold the family memory for holidays and that goes right back to North Wales, aged just 3 years old. I can't pick a 'best ever' but highlights are definitely, swimming with turtles in Australia, the most beautiful scenery ever when hiking in Slovenia and anywhere with the family. In September my husband and I went on a Retirement Adventure holiday and inter-railed around Europe, Cambridge to Istanbul by train. I loved the feeling of how interconnected Europe is and how a 15-minute train journey took us from a tiny station in the middle of nowhere to a station with full on international departure boards.

First car?

I've honestly never taken much notice of my cars – and there is always something more important to do than cleaning it. I think my first car was pretty much an old banger, acquired to save me from cycling to work when 6 months pregnant.

Cat or dog?

Cat. We've always had cats since moving to Histon in 1985. Our last cat, Jake died in 2022 age 17. I'm not sure we'll have another one – though we do have 3 chickens.

Historic heroes?

Elizabeth I

How your partner/friends would describe you?

I've been described as 'very organised' and admit I do love a good list of 'things to do'.

Beer or wine?

Wine for sure, though I do enjoy a half pint of Adnams Ghost Ship.

Favourite ever shoes?

I was so proud of the 1-inch platform shoes I had as a teenager.

Film or theatre or TV?

An outdoor Shakespeare play.

What last made you angry?

There is so much conflict in the world today, but it only makes me incredibly sad. What makes me angry is the Government backtracking on its environmental pledges because they believe it will gain them more voter support.

Actor to play you in a film of your life?

Emma Thompson – that would be cool.

Most successful sporting moment?

I took up rowing when I came to study at Homerton College. In fact, rowing is part of the reason that I'm still living near Cambridge over 40 years later, but that's another story. I have absolutely rubbish hand-eye coordination, but conveniently, this is not needed for rowing and I found it was a sport I could actually do quite well. Probably more by luck than absolute skill, I found myself in the very first Homerton crew to ever win their oars in the May Bumps and I still have the proud oar with the name of my crew in gold leaf writing, displayed on my living room wall.

Best thing about Histon & Impington?

It must be the huge community spirit. So many events and activities going on.

Worst thing about Histon & Impington?

The cost of housing meaning our young people have to move away from the village. Sad for our families, but also for the village demographics.

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